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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

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State Dept. review completed

Zhivkov Comments on Bulgarian Politburo

Bulgarian party chief Zhivkov told foreign diplomats assembled for a New Year's reception that no changes in the politburo membership would be made during the March party conference. He added that conference delegates would not elect a new first secretary either, quipping in good humor "I am on top and plan to stay here."

It remains to be seen whether the membership of the politburo will remain unchanged. As it now stands, the politburo has ten members, three of whom are more than 70-years of age. It thus is ripe for rejuvenation. Members of the secretariat, on the other hand, are generally younger and better educated. Todor Zhivkov and Boris Velchev, number two man in the party, are the only individuals who are on both bodies.

The diplomatic community has been expecting personnel shifts in the top leadership since at least last January following the death of politburo member Boyan Bulgaranov. Additionally, Angel Tsanev was removed as candidate member of the politburo in July and has not been replaced.

At the diplomat's reception, Zhivkov displayed the same optimism, confidence and good humor that he displayed during his New Year's eve speech to the nation. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Prodded about his general optimism by the Iraqi ambassador, Zhivkov replied that the oil crisis was not helping. The Iraqi retorted that there is plenty of oil, to which Zhivkov responded, "Yes, at a price." [REDACTED]

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Hungarian Repeats Standard Themes on "Freer Movement"

A year-end review of detente developments by Hungarian Politburo member Zoltan Komocsin broke little new ground in its treatment of the contentious "freer movement" issue. Komocsin supported "meaningful" exchanges, but rejected anything that smacked of intervention or ideological subversion. Foreign Minister Puja said much of the same thing last August (when he was still a deputy foreign minister) in an article keyed to the second phase of the European security conference.

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Although Komocsin does appear to suggest a more flexible posture, the differences may be more of style than of substance. Where Puja said the socialist countries recognize the "need" for exchanges, Komocsin said they "willingly welcome" them. Both expressed a disposition to hear out "constructive" proposals.

Komocsin also welcomed the normalization of relations with West Germany and claimed that the German question that had emerged from World War II had now been settled. He maintained that West Germany would no longer be able to start a new war--"even if militarism should gain the upper hand"--because East Germany is on the socialist side. He applauded those "realistic" policies pursued by the West German Social Democrats and expressed the Hungarian intent to further party-level relations.

European force reductions were called the "most complex problem", and one that required the most time to solve. At the same time, he opined that the significance of the ideological struggle will increase as the danger of armed conflict decreases.

Komocsin hailed the Soviets--and Brezhnev--as the moving force in detente and defended Moscow's bilateral dealings with the US as serving other interests "equally well." He singled out the world socialist system and the international working class as other beneficiaries. Citing the Soviets allegedly consistent support for anti-imperialist causes, Komocsin then strongly attacked the Chinese for anti-Soviet collusions.

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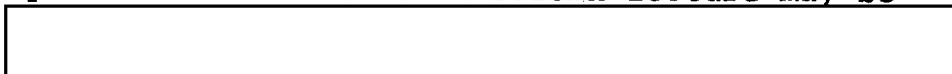
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Poland: Gierek's Boo of the Week

Poland has found its reputation as an international sports power somewhat tarnished by the defection of two hockey players from the national team. Following a match in Sweden, the 27-man squad suddenly found itself reduced to 25 players. Coming on the heels of the conviction of members of the national bridge team on currency charges, the latest incident does little to boost the image of "Socialist sportsmen" in Poland. A solemn lecture may be in order.



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